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Message Text

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15
ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ADP-00 /026 W
---------- 034235
R 111057 Z MAY 73
FM AMEMBASSY LONDON
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1115
INFO AMEMBASSY JIDDA
AMEMBASSY PARIS
AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV
AMEMBASSY TRIPOLI

C O N F I D E N T I A L LONDON 05528

EXDIS

DEPT PASS CAIRO

E. O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PFOR, MASS, EG, LY, FR
SUBJECT: EGYPTIAN- LIBYAN UNION AND FRENCH MIRAGES

SUMMARY: EGYPTIAN EMBOFF SAYS MIRAGES HAVE NOT YET BEEN TRANSFERRED TO EGYPT AND CITES SUCH TRANSFER AMONG REASONS MANY EGYPTIANS CONTINUE TO FAVOR UNION WITH LIBYA BY SEPTEMBER. END SUMMARY

1. DURING CALL ON US BY EGYPTIAN EMBOFF MAY 10 REPORTED SEPARATELY, WE ASKED FOR HIS ASSESSMENT OF CURRENT CHANCES EGYPTIAN- LIBYAN UNION BY SEPTEMBER. HE SAID QUESTION HAD BEEN PUT BY EGYPTIAN EMBASSY STAFF TO CHARGE AHMED UPON LATTER' S RECENT RETURN FROM TRIP HOME. AHMED GAVE CHANCES AS 50-50.

2. WHEN WE EXPRESSED SURPRISE, EGYPTIAN EMBOFF ASSURED US COMMITTEES HAVE NOT SLACKED THEIR PACE IN WORKING OUT MERGER DETAILS. QADHAFI REMAINS STRONGLY FOR MERGER, DESPITE OPPOSITION OF LOWER- RANKING LIBYANS. THERE IS ALSO CONSIDERABLE EGYPTIAN SUPPORT.

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3. EMBOFF THEN CITED FOUR REASONS WHY MANY EGYPTIANS FAVOR MERGER:

(A) OPPORTUNITY TO EMIGRATE TO LIBYA AND FIND WORK THERE;

(B) OPPORTUNITY TO FARM ARABLE LAND LYING IDLE SINCE DISCOVERY OF OIL;

(C) SHARE OF OIL REVENUES;

(D) FRENCH MIRAGES.

4. WHEN WE COMMENTED WE THOUGHT MIRAGES ALREADY TRANSFERRED TO EGYPT, EMBOFF SAID HE DID NOT THINK LIBYANS SO SILLY AS TO LET THIS HAPPEN BEFORE DELIVERIES OF ALL 110 AIRCRAFT COMPLETED IN SEPTEMBER. FRENCH HAD SAID AIRCRAFT SHOULD NOT BE LEFT SITTING ON AIR-FIELDS. THEY SHOULD THEREFORE HAVE NO OBJECTION TO AIRCRAFT VISITING NEIGHBORING EGYPT. CONTRARY TO HIS OWN FIRST BELIEF, PILOTS ARE LIBYANS BECAUSE THEY QUALIFY FROM PHYSICAL HEALTH POINT OF VIEW MUCH MORE READILY THAN EGYPTIANS, WHO OFTEN HAVE BEEN EXPOSED TO WHOLE RANGE OF DISEASES. OF COURSE, HE ADDED, IF UNION TAKES PLACE, LIBYA WILL HAVE JOINED EGYPT IN STATUS OF CONFRONTATION STATE, THUS PRESUMABLY ENCOUNTERING DIFFICULTIES WITH FRENCH MILITARY SALES POLICY.

ANNENBERG

NOTE BY OC/ T: NOT PASSED CAIRO.

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NMAFVVZCZ

*** Current Handling Restrictions *** n/a
*** Current Classification *** CONFIDENTIAL

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